

read a paper, be ready to discuss those which others read. And also, please remember that the papers are to be handed in and are to be published in the JOURNAL and thus become a part of the printed transactions of the society. If you desire to have your paper printed in some other journal as well, write to the editor, advising him of the journal in which you desire to have your paper published, and allow him to arrange for simultaneous publication. The Publication Committee has ruled—and wisely—that papers previously printed in other journals will not be printed in the STATE JOURNAL. This is in no way an injustice, for we desire to publish only first-hand material; and it is a very easy matter to arrange for simultaneous publication, if you desire it.

On page 92 will be found some resolutions recently passed by the Contra Costa County Society.

Similar discussion occurred at the last meeting of the San Joaquin Valley Society. (See JOURNAL, Vol. I, page 376.) At the last-named meeting, a committee was appointed to get the matter into proper shape and present it to the State Society in April, together with a request that the State Society take up the work and endeavor to secure betterment in present conditions. It is utterly absurd for any insurance company to ask a competent physician to make such an examination as could be of the slightest use to it for any fee less than \$5.00. To make a proper examination takes time and care, and that other element, "know how." When the man who knows how is secured, and he devotes the proper amount of time and care to the examination, his result is worth \$5.00 at the very least—and often much more than this small amount. There is hardly a doubt, now that the society represents about three-fourths of the eligible physicians of the State, that concerted and harmonious action would be productive of the desired result. There may be phases of the question that have not come to light in the discussion thus far, and if so it is to be hoped that they will come up and be discussed at Paso Robles. It does not appear that insurance companies are "trusts," but they certainly fit the recently exploited Weberfieldian definition of a "trust"—"A small body of men entirely surrounded by money."

Is extended to the members of the Oregon and Washington State Medical Societies to meet with us at Paso Robles on the 19th, 20th and 21st of April. It is a charming place and a delightful time of year. We have good reason to believe that this will be one of the best meetings the State Society has ever held and that the amount

and character of the scientific material presented will amply repay you for the trip. We say nothing of the gladness with which we would welcome you of the pleasure it would give us to meet you and become still better friends. We on the Pacific Coast should all know each other, and our aims and objects should be common. We are all working for the best there is in medicine, and for the strength that comes from medical organization; therefore, come you down the coast, stop at San Francisco, go with us to Paso Robles, and then with us again to Los Angeles, before you return. The railway people have made a rate of one and one-third fare for the round trip, allowing you to go to such points after or before the meeting, as you may desire, and this rate is extended alike to the members of the Oregon and Washington societies, as to our own. We should like to have you come, and we hope you will; we look forward to seeing you in April.

Since the introduction of the various hexamethylene tetramin preparations, their use has very greatly increased. Of late considerable inquiry seems to

**EFFECTS OF FORMALDEHYDE.** have been made as to the constitutional effect upon body tissues of the formaldehyde liberated on the decomposition of hexamethylene tetramin. One fact has been noted and should not be overlooked, especially by those who are examining for life insurance. Examination of the urine passed after taking this chemical shows response to a number of tests for albumin. Consequently it will be essential to guard against possible error by eliminating this factor in advance of a urine examination. As to whether or not the amount of formaldehyde liberated (at best a small quantity) is sufficient to produce any changes in the living tissues, and if so to what extent and of what nature, there seems no evidence pro or con. The question is receiving careful attention, and doubtless in due course we shall have some accurate information on the subject. It is unlikely, however, that the formaldehyde will be found to have injurious effects.

Considerable interest has been roused by the experiments of Metschnikoff and Roux in the inoculation of chimpanzees with syphilis. In two recent experiments initial sores and subsequent symptoms developed which apparently were clearly syphilitic. Two experiments are hardly conclusive, however, and we shall await further experimental data with considerable interest. Both animals inoculated, in whom Fournier and others agreed that syphilis subsequently appeared, died very shortly there-

after, the one probably from a pneumococcus, and the other from what may have been an influenza infection. While these secondary infections may have been contributory causes of death, it seems probable that the real cause was the syphilitic infection, and that anthropoids are profoundly affected by the disease will be evidenced as more experiments are made. Unfortunately the chimpanzee is a rather luxurious animal on which to experiment, for he is not only costly, but does not thrive in captivity.

#### THE UNITED RAILROADS OF SAN FRANCISCO.

In the *New York and Philadelphia Medical Journal* of February 6, 1904, is a news item which says that the New York Board of Health has undertaken to make a bacterioscopic study of paper money to discover if it probably may or may not be a medium for the dissemination of infectious diseases. Should it be shown that paper money habitually does contain disease germs, Dr. Thomas Darlington, Commissioner of the New York Board of Health, will "formulate a plan for the daily or weekly sterilization of money from the great arteries of trade, such as the street-car companies and the great retail stores."

In San Francisco, where paper money does not commonly circulate, the question is not such an important one, but there are three points to which the JOURNAL wishes to call the attention of the management of the United Railroads:

Ever since the introduction of the present transfer system, it is the custom for the conductors to wet their thumbs in their mouths to the more easily separate one or two transfers from the block, and not a few of the men will sometimes hold the block between their teeth so as to have two hands free for making change. Neither of these habits is cleanly. The amount of dirt the conductors put into their own mouths does not seem to occur to them, but the JOURNAL thinks for them and wishes them to be told what they are really doing. Moreover, the JOURNAL thinks for the people and protests against the public being obliged to use spat-on transfers, or have a series of annoying discussions with the conductors, for the JOURNAL has found out that conductors object to being asked for dry instead of wet transfers. The transfer itself is, of course, retired after having been used once, but a conductor with a streptococcus or diphtheritic infection latent in his throat could pass out potential amounts of infection to thousands of people every day, and some might easily infect their fingers and then their own mouths from the dirty transfers.

A second point is the way in which coins pass from hand to hand on the cars. Usually the passenger tenders his fare between a thumb and finger. The conductor takes it in the same way

and the fingers of passenger and conductor touch. This contact is not necessary and sometimes may be objectionable, as when a dirty-handed passenger offers money to the conductor, or when a dirty-handed conductor tenders change to the passenger. The correct way is for the passenger to put his fare into the conductor's hand, which should be held out, palm up, to receive it. No personal contact is needed in this transaction. The conductor should put the change into the passenger's upturned palm in the same way, without personal contact. This may be difficult to inaugurate, but a few placards in the cars, with illustrations, will help very much to educate the public, and the conductors can receive instructions from the company's office.

The third point is the hands of the conductors, or rather, the dirt that may be upon them. The JOURNAL knows perfectly well that the conductor must work bare-handed, and in a position most exposed to the acquiring of dirt, but it has noticed that some conductors always have clean hands, while others are very dirty-handed. This is no more true of conductors than it is of other men; but the fact that some men have clean hands and are conductors, shows that no one need have very dirty hands, and that hands as dirty as some conductors' hands are absolutely unnecessary. The JOURNAL suggests that the company arrange a place, at the end of each line, where conductors may wash their hands, and then make it obligatory that each man wash his hands at the up-town end of each trip.

#### COLORADO STATE SOCIETY JOURNAL.

*Colorado Medicine*, edited by Edward Jackson, is the form which the transactions of the Colorado State Medical Society has recently assumed. The monthly journal was authorized at the last meeting of the State Society and the first number appeared in November, 1903. The Colorado society is to be congratulated upon this move. No other single factor is so valuable or can be made to count with such force, as can the society journal properly edited and conducted. That the Colorado journal will be ably conducted under the guidance of Dr. Jackson, goes without saying. Every decent physician in the country should hug himself with a congratulatory embrace at the advent of another State Society journal, for through the medium of these journals will come eventual relief from the pest of nasty, murderous and shameless so-called "medical journals" which have existed too long. If ever a campaign of education and for decency was needed, it is needed now. The rank and file of the medical profession is a long way—a very long way—from the standards of honesty, ethics and decency of a generation or two ago. The average private "medical journal"